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Students' Perceptions of Madani Super Camp as a Medium for Developing English Speaking Skills at Nurul Haramain Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract

English speaking development can be constrained when learners have limited opportunities to use English beyond formal lessons. Madani Super Camp (MSC), an English-learning program at Nurul Haramain Islamic Boarding School, Indonesia, offers an alternative learning environment that provides students with opportunities to practice speaking through various communicative activities. This study aimed to describe students' perceptions of Madani Super Camp as a medium for developing English speaking skills, particularly their perceptions of the speaking activities provided during the program. Although previous studies have examined English camps and language-camp modules, limited research has specifically examined students' perceptions of a boarding-school Super Camp as a medium for speaking-skill development and the five speaking activities provided. This study addresses that gap and offers a context-specific account of MSC. This study employed a descriptive quantitative design involving 210 eighth-grade students who participated in MSC during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. A sample of 63 students was selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using a 20-item questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The findings revealed that students generally perceived the speaking activities positively, with mean scores ranging from 4.41 to 4.68. Vocabulary practice received the highest mean score (4.68), followed by speaking games (4.63), role-play (4.56), group discussions (4.54), and storytelling (4.41). These findings indicate that students viewed the activities as useful opportunities to practice English speaking in an engaging learning environment. However, the results reflect students' perceptions rather than objectively measured improvements in speaking performance. In conclusion, Madani Super Camp provides a learning context in which students perceive communicative speaking activities as valuable opportunities to practice and develop their English speaking skills.

Keywords: Madani Super Camp; students' perceptions; English speaking skills; speaking activities; descriptive quantitative research.

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INTRODUCTION

English speaking development can be constrained when learners have limited opportunities to use English beyond formal lessons. As a productive language skill, speaking requires learners to formulate and communicate ideas, convey meaning, and interact with others in the target language (Goh & Burns, 2012; Nation & Newton, 2009; Thornbury, 2005). In English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, opportunities for authentic communication may be limited when English is rarely used in everyday

interactions (Richards, 2008; Ur, 2012). Providing learners with meaningful opportunities to practise speaking is therefore an important consideration in language education (Goh & Burns, 2012; Nation & Newton, 2009; Thornbury, 2005).

One approach to providing such opportunities is through English-learning programs that incorporate interactive and communicative activities (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Richards & Renandya, 2002). Madani Super Camp (MSC), conducted at Nurul Haramain Islamic Boarding School in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, offers a context in which students can engage in English-related learning activities beyond their regular classroom lessons. The program includes activities such as role-play, group discussions, storytelling, vocabulary practice, and speaking games (Hamzah et al., 2023). These five activities were selected because each represents a distinct communicative speaking opportunity: role-play supports simulated interaction and formulaic expression (Thornbury, 2005); group discussion promotes negotiation of meaning and extended turns (Goh & Burns, 2012); storytelling supports connected discourse and fluency (Nation & Newton, 2009); vocabulary practice supports retrieval and use of words in context (Nation, 2007); and speaking games increase engagement and confidence (Ur, 2012). These activities provide different opportunities for students to use English, practise vocabulary in context, and participate in communicative interactions. Examining students' perceptions of these experiences can help clarify how they evaluate the opportunities for speaking practice offered by the program (Richards, 2008; Ur, 2012).

Previous studies have explored students' perceptions of English camps and related language-learning programs. Dirgantara et al. (2026) examined students' perceptions of an English camp at MA Female Ar-Risalah Islamic Boarding School, while Zakaria et al. (2022) investigated students' perceptions of a language camp module. In a related local context, Riyandani et al. (2024) examined motivational factors associated with students' participation in English-learning programs at MTs Putri Nurul Haramain Islamic Boarding School Narmada. These studies provide a useful background for examining learners' experiences in organized English-learning settings (Ismailov et al., 2021). However, these studies do not specifically examine students' perceptions of a boarding-school Super Camp as a medium for developing speaking skills or compare students' evaluations of the five communicative speaking activities provided. Therefore, the research gap lies in the limited context-specific evidence on how students perceive MSC and its speaking activities. The novelty of this study is its focus on MSC at Nurul Haramain Islamic Boarding School and its explicit examination of five speaking activities—speaking games, role-play, group discussion, storytelling, and vocabulary practice—from students' perspectives.

To examine these perceptions, the study considers six questionnaire indicators: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and speaking activities (Menggo & Gunas, 2022). The first five indicators concern aspects of speaking addressed in the questionnaire, whereas the sixth focuses on students' evaluations of the activities provided through MSC (Fan & Yan, 2020). These activities include role-play, group discussions, storytelling, vocabulary practice, and speaking games. Analyzing responses across these indicators allows the study to describe students' perceptions of different speaking-related aspects and identify the activities they evaluate most positively (Fathi et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025).

This study employed a descriptive quantitative design. The population comprised 210 eighth-grade students who participated in MSC during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, from which 63 students were selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using a questionnaire consisting of 20 positively worded statements rated on a five-point Likert scale. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. Accordingly, the findings represent students' reported perceptions rather than direct measurements of changes in speaking proficiency or evidence that MSC caused such changes (Aizawa et al., 2023).

Based on this focus, the study addresses three research questions: (1) How do students perceive the development of their English speaking skills through MSC? (2) Which aspects of speaking do students perceive as developing through their participation in the program? and (3) Which speaking activities do students perceive as helpful for developing their English speaking skills? By addressing these questions, the study provides a descriptive examination of students' perceptions of MSC, with particular attention to the speaking-related aspects and activities reflected in their questionnaire responses.

METHODS

The study used a descriptive quantitative survey design to summarize students' responses about their experiences of Madani Super Camp at Nurul Haramain Islamic Boarding School. The design was selected to describe response patterns rather than test causal hypotheses. The study context and program activities are described as reported in the study materials; the implementation fidelity and frequency of each activity were not independently observed for this analysis.

Population and Sample

The reported population consisted of 210 eighth-grade students who participated in MSC during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. A sample of 63 students was selected using simple random sampling, equivalent to 30% of the stated population. The sampling procedure was operationalized as follows: the researcher first compiled a sampling frame containing the names and student numbers of all 210 eighth-grade students who met the eligibility criterion, namely having participated in MSC during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. Each name was assigned a number from 1 to 210. Random selection was then conducted using a random number generator/lottery method to draw 63 numbers without replacement. Students whose numbers were selected were included in the sample.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire containing 20 positively worded statements. The instrument was developed by the researchers with reference to speaking indicators used in previous studies (Fan & Yan, 2020; Menggo & Gunas, 2022). The instrument covered six areas: pronunciation (3 items), grammar (3), vocabulary (3), fluency (3), comprehension (3), and speaking activities (5). Responses were coded on a five-point Likert scale: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5. The reported item set concerns students'

self-perceptions and perceived helpfulness of activities. It is not a direct assessment of speaking performance.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

The instrument was developed by the researchers rather than adopted as a fully validated standardized scale. The instrument was not subjected to formal statistical validity and reliability testing. Content validation through expert judgment and reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha were not conducted or documented. Therefore, the questionnaire should be treated as a researcher-developed descriptive instrument, and the absence of psychometric validation is acknowledged as a major limitation of this study. The findings should not be interpreted as having been obtained through a fully validated instrument.

Research Procedures

The study focused on students who had participated in Madani Super Camp, selected a sample of 63 students from the population of 210 eighth-grade students using simple random sampling, and collected data through the 20-item questionnaire. The responses were assigned scores according to the five-point Likert scale. The data were then organized by the six questionnaire indicators and analyzed using frequency, percentage, and mean scores. The findings were interpreted descriptively to represent students' perceptions of their speaking development and the speaking activities included in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency was used to determine the number of students selecting each response option, while percentage was used to describe the proportion of responses in each category. Mean scores were used to describe the overall tendency of responses to each questionnaire item. The findings were then summarized by indicator. The indicator averages presented in this article are arithmetic averages of the reported item means and are used as descriptive summaries rather than as separately calculated respondent-level composite scores.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Indicator Level

The reported item means ranged from 4.11 to 4.73 on the five-point scale. The average of item means was highest for vocabulary (4.67) and lowest for fluency (4.20). All indicator averages exceeded 4.00, suggesting that respondents generally endorsed the positive statements. Because these data are self-reported, the results indicate perceived development and perceived value rather than verified changes in speaking proficiency.

Table 1. Indicator-Level Descriptive Statistics

Indicator	Items	Item means	Average of item means
Pronunciation	3	4.62; 4.40; 4.16	4.39
Grammar	3	4.35; 4.41; 4.46	4.41
Vocabulary	3	4.71; 4.73; 4.56	4.67
Fluency	3	4.29; 4.11; 4.19	4.20
Comprehension	3	4.60; 4.51; 4.33	4.48
Speaking activities	5	4.56; 4.54; 4.41; 4.68; 4.63	4.56

Item Level Descriptive Statistics

Table 2. Item-Level Descriptive Statistics

Indicator / item	Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (SD)
Pronunciation 1	I can say English words more clearly after joining the Madani Super Camp.	63	3	5	4.62 (.551)
Pronunciation 2	I can say difficult English words more easily now	63	3	5	4.40 (.636)
Pronunciation 3	I can say English words with the correct stress.	63	3	5	4.16 (.601)
Grammar 1	I can make correct English sentences.	63	3	5	4.35 (.626)
Grammar 2	I make fewer grammar mistakes when speaking English.	63	3	5	4.41 (.613)
Grammar 3	I can use English tenses better when speaking.	63	3	5	4.46 (.563)
Vocabulary 1	I have learned many new English words.	63	4	5	4.71 (.455)
Vocabulary 2	I can use new English words when I speak.	63	4	5	4.73 (.447)
Vocabulary 3	I can choose the right English words when I speak.	63	3	5	4.56 (.532)
Fluency 1	I can speak English more smoothly.	63	3	5	4.29 (.551)
Fluency 2	I speak English with fewer pauses.	63	3	5	4.11 (.650)
Fluency 3	I can continue speaking in English for a longer time.	63	2	5	4.19 (.780)
Comprehension 1	I can understand my teacher when he/she speaks English.	63	3	5	4.60 (.583)
Comprehension 2	I can understand English instructions more easily.	63	3	5	4.51 (.564)
Comprehension 3	I can answer English questions more easily.	63	2	5	4.33 (.741)
Speaking activities 1	Role-play activities help me speak English better.	63	3	5	4.56 (.562)
Speaking activities 2	Group discussions help me improve my speaking.	63	3	5	4.54 (.534)
Speaking activities 3	Storytelling activities help me improve my speaking.	63	3	5	4.41 (.638)
Speaking activities 4	Vocabulary practice helps me speak English better.	63	3	5	4.68 (.502)

Indicator / item	Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (SD)
Speaking activities 5	Speaking games help me become more confident in speaking English.	62	2	5	4.63 (.579)

Perceptions of pronunciation and grammar

The pronunciation item means were 4.62, 4.40, and 4.16. Students gave the highest rating to the statement concerning clearer pronunciation and the lowest to the statement concerning word stress. This pattern suggests that learners felt more positive about perceived clarity than about stress placement. It does not establish that their pronunciation became objectively more accurate, because no recorded speech samples or rating rubric were reported.

Grammar item means ranged from 4.35 to 4.46. The highest mean concerned using English tenses better, while the lowest concerned forming correct sentences. The small spread across items suggests similarly positive self-reports across the three grammar statements. However, without a direct assessment of grammatical accuracy, these ratings should be interpreted as learners' impressions of their performance.

Perceptions of vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension

Vocabulary received the highest indicator average (4.67). Its item means were 4.71 for learning new words, 4.73 for using new words while speaking, and 4.56 for choosing appropriate words. The highest item mean in the questionnaire concerned using new vocabulary in speech. This result points to vocabulary as a particularly salient area in students' reported experience of MSC. It does not measure vocabulary size or demonstrate retention beyond the program.

Fluency had the lowest indicator average (4.20), although its item means remained above 4.00. Speaking more smoothly received a mean of 4.29, speaking with fewer pauses 4.11, and maintaining speech more easily 4.19. The comparatively lower rating for pauses suggests that sustaining speech without interruption may be a useful focus for subsequent practice. This is an instructional implication, not evidence that the program failed to improve fluency.

Comprehension had an average of 4.48. Students rated understanding a teacher speaking English most positively (4.60), followed by understanding English instructions (4.51) and answering English questions (4.33). Answering questions may involve both understanding a prompt and formulating a spoken response; the questionnaire cannot isolate these processes. The findings therefore support a cautious interpretation of perceived comprehension in the camp context.

Perceptions of speaking activities

The reported means for the five activities were 4.56 for role-play, 4.54 for group discussions, 4.41 for storytelling, 4.68 for vocabulary practice, and 4.63 for speaking games. All means were above 4.00. Vocabulary practice received the highest rating, followed by speaking games, while storytelling received the lowest rating among the listed activities. These differences describe relative ratings only; they cannot be interpreted as a ranking of instructional effectiveness because the design did not compare outcomes attributable to each activity.

The main finding is that students reported positive perceptions of MSC across all six questionnaire areas. The highest average was associated with vocabulary and the lowest with fluency. This pattern is useful for understanding how learners experienced the program, but its meaning should remain bounded by the design: a

one-time self-report survey can describe students' views, yet it cannot determine whether proficiency improved or whether MSC caused any change. The distinction is important because perceptions, confidence, opportunities to practise, and demonstrated performance are related but not identical outcomes (Goh & Burns, 2012; Thornbury, 2005).

The comparatively strong vocabulary ratings are consistent with the program's reported inclusion of vocabulary practice and activities that require learners to use words in communicative contexts. This finding aligns with Nation's (2007) argument that vocabulary learning should involve repeated retrieval and meaningful use, and with Thornbury's (2005) emphasis on lexical support in speaking instruction. Repeated encounters with vocabulary and opportunities to retrieve words while speaking may make vocabulary work particularly noticeable to learners. Nevertheless, the present data do not show whether students retained the words, used them accurately in unfamiliar contexts, or expanded their productive vocabulary. A future evaluation could combine student reports with pre- and post-program vocabulary measures and recorded speaking tasks (Nation & Newton, 2009).

Fluency was rated positively overall but lower than the other indicators, especially on the item about speaking with fewer pauses. This finding is consistent with Goh and Burns's (2012) view that fluency develops through repeated meaningful speaking opportunities and feedback, and it supports Ur's (2012) suggestion that learners need sustained practice in producing extended speech. This finding suggests a potential focus for program refinement. Instructors could provide repeated low-stakes speaking opportunities, short planning time, extended turns, paired retelling, and feedback on communication strategies. These are pedagogical options rather than interventions tested by this study. Any claim that they improve fluency would require a design that evaluates performance before and after implementation (Richards, 2008).

Students also rated all five listed activities positively. The high ratings for vocabulary practice and speaking games may reflect the engaging and accessible nature of these activities, as suggested by Ur (2012), while the positive rating for role-play supports Thornbury's (2005) claim that simulated interaction can provide supported speaking practice. Group discussion and storytelling likewise reflect the importance of negotiation of meaning and connected discourse in speaking development (Goh & Burns, 2012; Nation & Newton, 2009). The slightly higher ratings for vocabulary practice and speaking games may indicate that students found these formats accessible or engaging. However, the mean differences are modest, and the available analysis does not test whether they are statistically meaningful. Nor can perceived helpfulness establish that one activity produces better learning outcomes than another. Future work could document the frequency and duration of activities, observe student participation, and examine whether different task types are associated with measurable changes in speaking performance.

The study contributes a context-specific description of learners' views in an Indonesian Islamic boarding-school program. This contribution extends previous Indonesian studies on English camps and language programs (Dirgantara et al., 2026; Riyandani et al., 2024; Zakaria et al., 2022) by focusing specifically on MSC and on students' evaluations of five speaking activities. Its practical value is as formative feedback for program planning, not as a definitive effectiveness evaluation. The interpretation is constrained by the absence of reported questionnaire validation and

reliability evidence, missing detail about ethics procedures and administration, one missing response on an item, and the lack of a direct speaking assessment or comparison group. In addition, the item means could not be independently recalculated without the respondent-level dataset. Transparent reporting of these limitations strengthens rather than weakens the credibility of the conclusions.

CONCLUSION

Students who participated in Madani Super Camp generally gave positive ratings to statements about their perceived speaking development and to the speaking activities included in the questionnaire. In relation to the first research question, students perceived their English speaking skills as developing positively through MSC, as indicated by indicator averages above 4.00. In relation to the second research question, the aspects of speaking perceived as developing most positively were vocabulary (4.67), followed by speaking activities (4.56), comprehension (4.48), grammar (4.41), pronunciation (4.39), and fluency (4.20). In relation to the third research question, vocabulary practice received the highest activity rating (4.68), followed by speaking games (4.63), role-play (4.56), group discussions (4.54), and storytelling (4.41). Taken together, these findings suggest that learners valued opportunities to build and use vocabulary and to participate in engaging communicative activities, while fluency—especially speaking with fewer pauses—may warrant further instructional attention. They do not demonstrate objectively measured improvement or establish a causal effect of MSC. A stronger evaluation should combine perception data with validated instruments, direct speaking assessments, and preferably pre-test/post-test or comparison-group designs.

RECOMMENDATION

For students, continued participation in speaking activities and regular practice outside the camp may help them develop confidence and use English more frequently. The questionnaire findings indicate that students viewed role-play, group discussions, storytelling, vocabulary practice, and speaking games positively, so students may continue to take part actively in these activities.

For English teachers and Madani Super Camp instructors, the findings suggest that students value a variety of speaking opportunities. Instructors may continue using role-play, group discussions, storytelling, vocabulary practice, and speaking games while providing additional support for fluency, including practice in speaking at length and expressing ideas with fewer pauses.

For the school, maintaining opportunities for meaningful English communication may support students' continued practice. If the school wishes to evaluate students' speaking performance rather than perceptions alone, future program evaluation may combine student-perception questionnaires with direct speaking assessments.

For future researchers, similar studies may include a clearly documented validity and reliability procedure and, where appropriate, pre-test/post-test speaking assessments or comparison groups. Such designs could help distinguish students' perceptions from measurable changes in speaking performance. Researchers should

also report missing responses and check the final dataset against the original questionnaires before analysis.

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